

**Joint Capital Planning Committee
Minutes
February 4, 2016**

Members Present: Doug Slaughter (Chair), Steve Braun, Tamson Ely, Connie Kruger, Rick Hood, Jonathan McCabe, Bernie Kubiak.

Also Present: Sonia Aldrich, Comptroller; Claire McGinnis, Treasurer/Collector; Christine Brestrup, Planning Department; David Ziomek, Conservation and Development; Guilford Mooring, DPW; Sharon Sharry, library director; Cynthia Harbeson, curator of Special Collections; Matthew Berube, library IT; Sean Hannon, head of town's IT department. Larry Kelley, blogger.

Meeting called to order at 9:08

The minutes of 8/19/15 were approved with minor corrections, 7-0-2 absent.

The minutes of 1/28/16 were approved with minor corrections 7-0-2 absent.

Conservation requests

Mr. Ziomek reviewed FY17 capital requests totaling \$17,334. Noted that we are in the 2nd year of a 3 year lease for a tractor, which is committed debt, shared with water enterprise fund. Future year items reviewed. Mr. Kubiak encouraged greater access to town trail system.

Planning requests

Mr. Ziomek reviewed FY17 capital requests totaling \$63,000. Option is to move \$50,000 for design of the northern part of the town commons to FY18 because there is a concurrent request to CPAC for these tasks. The \$50,000 will likely still be needed, however, because CPAC funds are expected to be insufficient to complete the job. Current plan is to use CPAC for design phase and some construction, then additional money with a second round of CPAC funding and, possibly, capital funding.

Departmental request for wayfinding signage (\$13,000). Incremental need to the \$10,000 that was in FY16 capital budget. Business Improvement District (BID) is also working on signs in collaboration with the town's efforts—they are not duplicative.

Ms. Kruger notes that this isn't a "new" request—change will be made in document, committee members are requested to simply note the changes on their copies of the document.

Ms. Brestrup reviewed plans for north area of downtown Amherst: plans are moving ahead for a roundabout at the Triangle St./East Pleasant St. intersection. Capital budget includes money for ancillary costs (e.g., landscaping) for that project. Parking needs continue to be a priority and money is included (in addition to money from transportation enterprise fund) for a study that is starting now and will last until June to evaluate the town's parking needs. \$15,000 is requested for rewriting the sign section of zoning bylaw, which is considered unnecessarily complex and confusing. Building commissioner is involved with this effort.

Ms. Kruger questioned why this money is in FY18 and advocated moving it to FY17 because there may be legal implications of the current, flawed, zoning section. Mr. Kubiak agreed with shifting the money to FY17.

Sonia asked whether the parking study money in capital should, instead, come from the transportation enterprise fund. General agreement from the committee that this, in fact, should be changed.

Ms. Brestrup outlined status of bike share program. Town is in 2nd phase of feasibility study for bike share program (money is currently included in FY18 and FY19 for this project). Town is seeking funding from some local sources, including colleges, to build 4 bike sharing stations. Mr. Slaughter noted that this is a wider effort, including other nearby towns to leverage economies of scale. Ms. Kruger asked why this request is capital and, more generally, would like greater clarity from town staff about what are legitimate capital requests. Mr. Slaughter noted that previous JCPC reports have articulated guidelines for capital expenditures and invited committee members to review those and, if desired, ask for a group discussion at a later meeting.

Library capital requests

Ms. Harbeson reviewed the request for digital file storage (see Infrastructure for Digital File Storage Proposal, FY2017 Capital Request). She said current computer memory capacity cannot accommodate the very large files sizes and file volumes that are needed in order to preserve materials that are degrading and/or exist in obsolete formats.

Ms. Harbeson explained that the requested money will be supplemented with money from CPAC funding. Total funding is \$45,000 (\$35,000 from capital request, \$10,000 from CPAC). Mr. Slaughter asked if the current requests will be adequate for future needs, since the collection will grow with time. Mr. Hannon said the 66 terabyte storage requested is large enough to accommodate at least some future needs, although more storage will likely be needed, which will also be covered by the current request (hope is that cost of storage will continue to drop, allowing for greater capacity in the future).

Mr. Hannon said the \$25,000 in library's capital request is standard and is actually part of the town's larger IT budget (staff notes that there won't be a duplicate request—the line is included in the library's proposed capital budget for informational purposes only).

The \$15,000 for website migration to CivicPlus is also in the town's IT budget and appears in the library request for information only. Note that this is final payment (of three) on an ongoing contract with CivicPlus to complete the town-wide website upgrade.

Ms. Sharry reviewed the status of the library renovation/construction project and handed out a timeline showing dates of various milestones. An estimated project cost is expected in September/October of 2016. She noted that the library needs to meet the requirements of the Massachusetts Public Library Construction/Renovation grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, while still maintaining affordability in light of the town's other large capital needs. She noted that construction costs will be covered with a range of sources, including a fund-raising campaign, and federal and/or state historic structure grants. Efforts will be made to maintain existing gardens on north side of the library, and to collaborate with the Amherst Historical Society to acquire some land and create a physical connection between the two buildings.

Department of Public Works

Mr. Mooring reviewed "rolling stock." Currently his department has \$4.6 million worth of trucks, loaders, mowers, tractors, and a wide range of other "rolling stock." Vehicles highlighted in green on his handout are in a "replacement window"—meaning they should be replaced within 3 years. Roughly \$800,000 worth of vehicles are in this replacement window (some of these will appear in the FY17 capital request).

Chapter 90 funds can only be used for vehicles with a minimum 20,000 gross vehicle weight (GVW), hence not for relatively light vehicles such as pickup trucks.

Mr. Mooring noted that, currently, there is no overlap with equipment between DPW and LSSE, although there is cooperation between the departments to maintain ball fields and some other green spaces.

Mr. Mooring reviewed the DPW capital requests (see complete request for details). Note that no sidewalk money is requested this year because there is money left over from previous years.

If he needed to cut something, he would reduce/eliminate paving money and/or the storm water money. Possibly move security and lamp relighting to next year's budget.

Some items (typically items costing more than \$120,000 with long expected lifespan) will be funded by bonding.

Mr. Kubiak noted that the town still has a roughly \$16 million backlog of road repairs and that, therefore, he would not be in favor of cutting back on roadwork.

Mr. Mooring summarized the status of the DPW building project. A feasibility and needs assessment is currently underway. The consultant has come up with a recommended building size and has reviewed 9 physical potential sites for a new DPW structure. Will make recommendations to Town Manager, including 2-3 sites. Next steps: larger committee will be formed by Select Board to review both the DPW and Fire Department projects. It is expected that DPW will need ~\$150,000 to develop building schematics, but they're not ready to move forward with that.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Submitted by Stephen Braun

Documents used at the meeting:

1. JCPC General Fund Five Year Capital Plan Fiscal Years 2017-2021
2. Planning Departmental Capital Request Summary FY17 – FY21
3. Conservation Departmental Capital Request Summary FY17 – FY21
4. Library Capital Request Summary FY17 – FY21
5. Department of Public Works Capital Request Summary FY17 – FY21